DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 350 265 SP 034 025

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TITLE Induction Practices at the District Level: Fact or Fiction.
PUB DATE Apr 92
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 20-24, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Teacher Induction; Beginning Teachers; *Board of Education Policy; *Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Inservice Teacher Education; Models; School Districts; Surveys; Teacher Attitudes; *Teaching Conditions
IDENTIFIERS British Columbia

ABSTRACT

Induction of beginning teachers has become a significant issue in education for several reasons: teacher retention, personal and psychological assistance to beginning teachers, assessment, reform, and academic curiosity. This study examined school district induction practices in the province of British Columbia (Canada). The objectives of the study were: to determine whether induction programs existed, to identify the policies and practices that characterized the programs, and to observe how the reported policies and practices were actually being carried out in the districts. For the study, a model for beginning teacher induction involving four levels of teacher assistance was proposed and used as a rough template against which to view the practices in the districts. The first level of teacher assistance is the "nuts and bolts" level which includes assistance and orientation to the context of the workplace in which the beginning teacher will be employed. At the second level, beginning teachers receive psychological support. At the third level, programs deal with changes in teaching practice. The fourth level involves programs that focus on reflection and professional growth. Telephone interviews with district personnel in eight districts were used to obtain information on district policy; questionnaires were used to collect data from beginning teachers in two school districts about the kinds of assistance they actually received. Results based on 53 responses to the questionnaire indicated that: the districts appeared to be working primarily at the first level of the teacher assistance model; while induction is widely talked about at the district level, it has not yet become a serious and integral part of most school districts; and the assistance that beginning teachers received was more a function of the school atmosphere and help from significant colleagues than any planned district programs. (Contains 26 references.) (IAH)

ED350265

Induction practices at the district level: Fact or fiction.

by

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A paper presented to the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association

April, 1992

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Background

The first year of teaching marks a unique and important period in the professional and personal career of a teacher. Following successful completion of pre-service teacher education, the new teacher generally enters the profession with high ideals and some beginning strategies to put those ideals into practice. (At least we carry that hope). For some, the experience of the first year provides challenges, rewards, and satisfying accomplishments. For others the first year experience is often beset with disappointments and difficulties that sometimes lead to disillusionment and early exit from the profession. Those who leave teaching commonly do so in the first three to five years and such individuals are often the most academically talented (Huling-Austin, 1986; Mark and Anderson, 1985; Schlechty and Vance, 1983). Those able to weather the storm of the first year of teaching often look back with a sense of relief at having survived the ordeal. Unfortunately, many of those who survive the first few years--the induction phase--come to rely on a limited repertoire of teaching skills (Rosenholtz, 1987).

Proper assistance for beginning teachers upon entry into teaching appears to be a missing link. Abandoned by the institutions that prepared them for teaching, and given only minimal assistance by school districts who hired them, beginning teachers are frequently left to 'sink or swim' during their induction into the profession. Without opportunities that allow for growth and development beyond just coping little chance exists that people will move towards new challenges in their career. Beginning teachers in particular must be able to see that their efforts will result in producing the positive outcomes for students. Limited opportunities for growth and development also means professional development of the budding teacher may be seriously impeded during the induction period. How a beginning teacher survives this period often determines what kind of teaching style will be adopted and perpetuated. Survival of the fittest in this context may well mean the developing professional is sacrificed and mediocrity encouraged. Formal induction programs to help beginning teachers therefore may be an alternative for alleviating the negative effects during the entry year and provide a basis for improved teaching in schools.

Induction, or those first critical years, has now been discovered by the educational press and the concept has found its way into the vernacular of teacher educators and school district people. Several major journals have devoted whole issues to the topic and educational organizations have held national conferences or sessions on induction. Huling-Austin argues that "finally the most powerful testimony to support the growing recognition of the importance of teacher induction is the increasing numbers of teacher induction programs being implemented across the country" (p.5).

In the province of British Columbia where this study took place the Ministry of Education has encouraged districts to introduce induction programs for beginning teachers. Similar programs have been introduced in other provinces as well. However commendable this attention to induction, informal observation suggests that programs where they do exist seldom achieve the expectations held for them. A recent study in Ontario has found that beginning teachers receive very limited introduction to the profession and that forms of assistance that do occur usually come from a few caring colleagues (Cole and McNay, 1988; Fullan and Connelly, 1987). Thus while one finds districts talking a good game when it comes to induction, one can question whether that talk is matched by action. This general question led to the study reported in this paper.

Objectives

This study which examined district practices regarding teacher induction in the Province of British Columbia came at a time when much encouragement had been given to districts to undertake induction programs. It first sought to identify the practices and policies reported by those in the district offices and to then observe how those policies and practices were actually being carried out in the districts. Further, the authors were curious as to why the notion of induction was now receiving so much press and attention. To this end we reviewed the appropriate literature in teacher induction to determine the purposes that programs of induction are intended to serve and the types of programs that should be designed to achieve those purposes. The study became an examination of how such purposes and practices were acted out in the districts throughout the province.

The study was also undertaken because several had pointed to a lack of information about whether induction programs and practices will guarantee the positive outcomes desired. While many such as Odell (1987) contend that the needs of beginning teachers cannot be ignored, most still admit that induction programs are simply still too new to be a proven component of the life-long process of developing teachers. Others contend that despite the lack of evaluative research support for induction programs, there are indications that such programs will make a difference. Our first concern was whether such programs even existed.

Perspectives and Background Literature

This section briefly summarizes our literature review in two areas, the motives behind induction and the frameworks for carrying it out.

The lens behind the eye. Our review of literature supported by interviews with district people and attendence at meetings where the topic of induction was being discussed pointed to five reasons why induction has become an issue in education: teacher retention, personal and psychological assistance, assessment, reform and academic curiosity.

One of the compelling reasons for implementing teacher induction programs has been the alarming rate at which beginning teachers make early exit from the profession. Retention of teachers within the profession is of great importance and can be seen as an indicator to gauge the health of the education profession. Attracting desirable candidates into teaching is admirable but retaining such talented people is necessary if teaching as a profession is to remain viable and strong. In the United States the retention rate of beginning teachers is very much a concern.

> Research shows that beginning teachers leave in the largest numbers. Schlecty and Vance (1983) estimate that, nationally, approximately 15% of the new teachers leave after their first year of teaching as compared to the overall teacher turnover rate of 6%. This means that the first year teacher is 2 1/2 times more likely to leave the profession than his or her more experienced counterpart. Of all beginning teachers who enter the profession 40 to 50% will leave during the first seven years of their career and in excess of two-thirds of those will do so in the first four years of teaching. (Huling-Austin, 1987, p.9)

Compounding this retention crisis is the predicted teacher shortage (Darling-Hammond, 1984) which may make attracting new promising candidates to the teaching profession even more difficult. More recently in the province of British Columbia, Canada, the Royal Commission on Education states that after 1991-92 "the province will experience an acute shortage of approximately 1,800 teachers per year-an intolerable situation" (Sullivan, 1988, p.38). While it is not clear whether the same problems with retention are experienced in British Columbia it is apparent that unless teaching is viewed as a desired career, attracting the very best prospects will be hard to do. One of the avenues by which the profession might be made more attractive is the way in which beginning teachers are helped to make the transition from student-teacher to teacher. "The Commission recommends: That district-based induction programs be established cooperatively by school districts and teachers, and that they be characterized by special support services and carefully designed teaching assignments during the first year of induction" (Sullivan, 1988, p.40)

Closely linked to the early exit phenomenon, is the recognition that beginning teacher require personal, psychological and professional support. This view often takes the position that the pre-service training of teachers can never be adequate preparation for entry to the profession. Ward (1987) holds that when school districts provide structures that build upon realistic expectations for novice teachers' performance and offer support and training necessary to further their knowledge, skills, and perceptions of teaching that such individuals are more likely to participate in school improvement, teacher training, curriculum development, and other professional development efforts that extend beyond the classroom. Induction programs carefully designed may provide the structure necessary to lead beginning teachers to becoming truly professional.

Wideen and Andrews (1987) suggest that beginning teachers receive induction programs under the umbrella of teacher education because it provides opportunity for ongoing professional development that is likely to establish a pattern of receptivity to future staff development efforts. Such patterns are expected of a professional in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. In short, the dimensions for effective induction of beginning teachers is a necessary step in the development of professionals in moving towards the preferred state where practitioners are more likely to become 'reflective' about their craft provided that preservice teacher education has set the stage for that. That notion in turn is likely to cause teachers to remain in the profession.

Retaining teachers provided the main motivator for many of the superintendents which whom we spoke. If they could cut down the number of teachers leaving the district, they could save money in recruitment. An induction program might do this.

Andrews' review (1986) of induction programs points to another purpose, namely, assessment. Many point out that induction programs for beginning teachers have been built upon either an assessment model or an assistance and support model as the primary purpose and emphasis (Cole and McNay, 1988; Newcombe, 1987). The assessment model, characterized by its evaluative and summative components, measures generic teaching skills demonstrated by the beginning teacher. While the underlying purpose in

this model is to improve teaching skills of the beginning teacher through remediation of deficiencies that surface during assessment of their teaching, certification is granted only upon successful completion of the program. This model is most often associated with the state mandated induction programs occurring in the United States and the "Teacher Residency Program recently proposed to the Ministry of Education in Alberta (Ratsoy et al., 1987) would appear to bear some of these characteristics as well" (Cole and McNay, 1988).

While state assessment induction programs appear to meet demands for ensuring that beginning teachers master a minimum of basic teaching competencies before receiving certification, others are critical of the assessment model. The state assessment induction systems often derive a compendium of competencies from much of what has been learned from the effective teaching research but the use of this research as the litmus test of teaching has at best mixed results for judging exemplars of teaching (Griffin, 1985).

Another criticism of the assessment model inherent in the state mandated induction programs rests on its use of the program as a selection process for hiring prospective candidates for teaching positions. Some state mandated induction programs, used as screening devices, ensure minimum competencies are demonstrated by beginning teachers before certification is granted (Fox and Singletary, 1987).

Hawk and Robards (1987) indicate that the number of state mandated induction programs in the United States is becoming more prevalent and they predict that such programs will eventually be commonplace in the 1990's. If their predictions are accurate the assessment model as described and applied to beginning teacher induction programs may proliferate, but is not likely to do its work of producing quality teachers. "Assistance to the beginning teacher, if it occurs in these programs, is generally delegated to local districts, and it tends to focus upon improving the performance of a specific competency with which a teacher had difficulty on the assessment, rather than on developing a repertoire of skills " (Newcombe, 1987, p.13). Andrews found few induction programs that were able to strike a balance between assessment and assistance, usually it was one or the other. He notes too that the literature seems to lean heavily towards the purpose of assistance rather than assessment. His review leaned heavily programs developed in the 70s. Our sense of the recent literature suggests that assessment has diminished as a motivating factor for encouraging induction programs.

Though rarely stated in a direct way, many who promote induction appear to carry a reform agenda along with their proposals. It lies somewhat in the background, but nonetheless pervades Those who take this view often hold the perspective that teacher education and teacher development occur on a continuum which involves preservice, induction and inservice. Without strong programs of induction the effects of preservice teacher education are frequently 'washed out' by the realities of the first year of teaching; beginning teachers quickly become socialized to the norms of traditional schooling and the cycle continue (Zeichner, 1991). Induction provides one means by which this cycle can be broken. But when the underpinnings of this argument are examined the notion of reform becomes obvious. Clearly, preservice teacher education is to produce teachers who can reform the system; induction becomes the shelter conditions to allow them to do that.

A further motive behind the interest in the induction year rests with the curiosity of those who pursue it a an area of study. The first year of teaching provides an excellent laboratory to examine how people learn to teach. As we know from the literature as well as our own experience, the year can be a very traumatic one for those entering teaching. They no longer have the supervision and guidance they had during their teacher education program. Fort many, it may be their first full time entry into the work force. However the transition is made, the period is one of flux, extreme pressure, and enormous challenge. Learning to cope, learning to sink or swim or learning to grow professionally becomes a period of learning to teach.

Frameworks for induction. The literature also produced several frameworks from which to view, assess and plan induction. Johnston and Kay (1987) propose five goals or purposes for teacher induction: orientation, psychological support, acquisition and refinement of teaching skills, retention, and evaluation. They argue that institutions of higher learning can no longer be on the sidelines but must take an active role in teacher induction beyond preservice training.

Fox and Singletary (1986) identify essential elements of an induction program that are necessary in addressing the concerns of beginning teachers. Such elements should include the following: "provisions for acquiring additional knowledge and instructional skills; opportunities for developing attitudes that foster effective teaching performance; assistance in recognizing the effects of isolation; and aid in becoming integrated into the school district and community" (p.13). Based upon their experience, Fox and Singletary further recommend that induction seminars be given to beginning teachers with particular emphasis on the following goals:

1. Develop a psychological support system for the teacher, focusing on self-perception and attitudes likely to result in increasing commitment and retention.
2. Assist in the development of acceptable methods for solving problems that typically confront new teachers, especially methods of classroom management and discipline.

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3. Help develop the skills necessary to transfer the pedagogic theories received in preservice courses into appropriate teaching practices.
4. Provide experiences in which new teachers can begin to develop professional attitudes and the analytical and evaluative skills necessary to maintain a high level of proficiency in a continually changing profession (p.13).

They suggest specific kinds of activities and procedures for attaining the goals during the seminar sessions. These suggestions include location of where the seminar should take place and scheduling of how often they should be held, selection of seminar facilitation, who should assume responsibility for providing induction seminars, program components during the seminar which would allow beginning teachers to develop skill in self-evaluation and reflection, peer support and exchange of information between beginning teachers. The idea of seminars has great validity when one considers that even brief workshops and a training manual provided at the beginning of the school year for planning and organizing elementary classrooms has proved to be more effective than leaving teachers to their own devices (Evertson, Emmer, Sandford, Clements, Worsham, 1984). Finally, they stress the need for institutes of higher learning and other educational agencies to become collaboratively involved in induction for the beginning teacher. The overarching goal in all this according to Fox and Singletary is the development of the analytic and reflective growth of the beginning teacher.

Andrews (1987) in his comparative examination of induction programs in five countries identified five paradigms for viewing induction, the laissez-faire model, the collegial model, the formalized mentor-protege model, the mandated competency-based model, and the self-directing professional model. The laissez-faire model is characterized by a lack of any planned effort of assistance for the beginning teacher apart from inservice generally offered to teaching staffs as professional development. Andrews says that this type of assistance indicates what is prevalent in Canada, Britain, and parts of the U.S.A.

In the collegial model " the underlying assumption of this induction paradigm being that the collegial relationship of the beginning teacher with an experienced peer in the same school emphasizes the supportive, personalized, school-based and non-evaluative form of induction practice" (p. 300). A formalized mentor-protege model is described as a helping relationship whereby a mentor is assigned to a beginning teacher but unlike the collegial model the mentor assumes an evaluative role. The "interaction between the mentor and the beginning teacher would comprise modelling, supervision, coaching, discussion, and curriculum collaboration" (p. 301).

The mandated competency-based model as its name implies is assistance given to beginning teachers with a focus on assessment and accountability for attaining specific outlined teaching competencies. Usually this type of model emerges as a result of state mandated requirements for certification of teachers and fulfillment of policy regulations for induction programs. The self-directing professional model is one where the " beginning teacher may experience modifications of any of the last three scenarios but most importantly first year professional in-service activities are seen as the beginning of an ongoing continuing education programme for the first year teacher" (p. 303).

Rosenholtz (1987), after detailing the necessary structures needed to increase teacher efficacy and limit teacher dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and defection in the workplace offers the following ten organizational conditions as factors in designing induction programs for beginning teachers:

1. Initial teaching assignments that place them neither in the most difficult schools nor with the most difficult students;
2. Discretion and autonomy to make important classroom choices with information about options and possibilities gained through opportunities to participate in decision-making with colleagues and administrators;
3. Clear goals set by administrators, colleagues, and beginners themselves toward which they should initially strive;
4. Clear, frequent, and helpful feedback from administrators and colleagues about the progress they are making with suggestions to help them improve;
5. Regular encouragement and acknowledgement of their efforts by building administrators and colleagues;
6. A school ethos that explicitly encourages them to ask for advice when needed and to feel non-threatened when others offer theirs;
7. Opportunities to talk frequently with more expert colleagues about teaching problems and possibilities, to observe them at their work, and to be observed by them;

8. Encouragement to continuously experiment with new teaching ideas and to enjoy colleagues who do likewise;
9. School-wide standards for student conduct that beginners can be helped to enforce consistently;
10. Opportunities for beginners to participate in school efforts that involve parents in their children's learning and that keep parents regularly informed (p.30).

The implications of Rosenholtz's ten organizational conditions are extensive and implies a readiness for action within the profession. This assumption may be an error by omission, for as Huling-Austin (1988), points out, many have made the mistake of thinking that because there are mandated induction programs that there is also general consensus in the profession regarding their value and merit. This is simply not so according to Huling-Austin and she says that one of the features of designing an induction program must include the need to educate the profession as well as the public about teacher induction.

The idea of a teacher development school as a vehicle for induction programs has also been supported by others. In their extensive review, Wise, Darling-Hammond, and Berry (1987), recommend an induction school as a type of supervised internship which could be implemented by school districts in schools where high staff turnover had previously been experienced. An induction school, in this sense, would be the responsibility of a school district and would provide developmental experiences to beginning teachers delivered by seasoned veterans. Beginning teachers would undergo an internship including both assistance and assessment in this type of induction and Wise et al see the following benefits occurring:

> Supervision for beginning teachers with eased entry to teaching, better preparation for teaching, and reduced attrition; an attractive assignment for senior teachers that recognizes and uses their talent and experience; a setting wherein first-year teachers could be efficiently and effectively evaluated; and more resources and more stable teaching for disadvantaged children. (p.95)

Schlechty et al (1988) have described a school district's attempts to establish a professional development school involving major changes to the school system but admit that such a project will take a ten year time span to fully implement. Although an induction school as described has great potential in accomplishing the goal of moving beginning teachers towards the goal of becoming a professional it would appear that there is little evidence in the literature of this type of induction occurring.

The great diversity between types of induction programs and the varying intensity applied in their implementation makes it difficult to categorize them into discrete models. However, some characteristics do seem to surface and lines of demarcation exist between types of induction programs. Kester and Marockie (1987) claim that induction programs generally fall into three categories and can be characterized as either orientation, evaluation, or assistance. Huling-Austin and Murphy (1987) found that induction programs could be generally grouped into four clusters after considering the content, organization, and intent of the programs; state mandated programs; collaboratively operated programs; local district programs; and no formal program. Ward (1987) describes structures which are recommended for induction programs and essentially form the basis for two types of induction, one being a mentor teacher structure for induction and the second a teacher development school.

For our study, we drew on these different frameworks to propose a model involving four levels of teacher assistance. The first involved the 'nuts and bolts' level which included assistance and orientation to the context of the workplace in which the beginning teacher will be employed. At a second level we saw programs attending to the psychological needs of beginning teachers. At a further level we saw induction programs dealing with the more sophisticated issues such as changes in teaching practice. The fourth level involved the stage of reflection and professional growth. This became the rough template against which to view the practices in the districts.

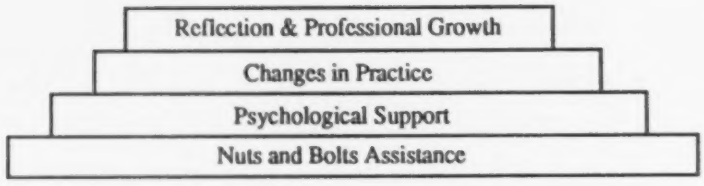

Figure 1: ;A Model for Assisting Beginning Teachers

Methods and data sources

The first stage of the study involved a telephone interview with district personnel in eight districts in the Province of British Columbia. These districts had been chosen because they had experienced growth in terms of hiring new teachers over the past five years. It was assumed that if any districts were to have induction programs it would be those which had been hiring new teachers. Initial telephone contacts were followed with a letter which outlined the questions that would be asked. A formal telephone interview was then conducted with personnel in each of the districts. Second, a questionnaire was distributed to beginning teachers in two districts having the highest annual mean average percentage of projected growth, plus the required minimum of 10 beginning teachers. The questionnaire asked about specific kinds of assistance that the two school districts said they offered to beginning teachers and the results were used to compare what beginning teachers said they had actually received. The second step provided a means of determining whether the activities described in district offices were actually being put into practice at the school level. The data from the interviews were transcribed. Once the data had been collected and summarized, the authors attempted to assess the degree to which the practices of induction reflected what the literature pointed to as effective practice.

Results

In general, the results pointed to a high level of understanding about the importance of induction and a good sense of what it should entail. Unsurprisingly, most saw induction as a means to help teachers adjust to the practices of the district. Some talked of retention. When it came to the level of practice, the districts varied from those reporting a strong induction program to those reporting virtually nothing. In many cases those responsible could not even identify how many beginning teachers taught in their district. When the district whose administrators reported having a strong induction program was compared with the one who reported nothing, no differences across those districts were found when beginning teachers were surveyed. Where differences among teachers did they were associated with schools, not districts. Furthermore, our analysis suggested that a proper nurturing and supportive school climate may in itself be the best means of induction. When the conditions for conducting optimal induction programs posed by Rosenholtz (1987) are examined closely we were hard pressed to find anything there that one would not wish to have in a school. When we juxtaposed our data against the model we had drawn from the literature, it appeared that the districts were working at the fringes of the first level, that is the 'nuts and bolts' level. Virtually nothing occurred that could be described at other levels. In short, we found more fiction then fact.

The comments made by the district administrators we interviewed appeared to reflect the issues that we frequently see raised in the literature. The following comments typified our conversations with school administrators who were asked about the problems facing beginning teachers:

> I have often commented that teachers that are coming into the teaching force are expected to shoulder far many more burdens than they are trained to do. We are now expecting our teachers to be in parents, counsellor, psychologist, psychiatrist, and a host of other things, yet when it comes to teacher training quite a lot of it is in terms of the routine things of teaching, methods and things like that. So I think that is the most overwhelming thing that a teacher faces in present context. I think that this particular thing is further accentuated by the economic times, where both mother and father are working or the high percentage of single parent families or separated families, these social and economic needs poses a further burden on teachers. Not only is a beginning teacher faced with the challenge

> of the teaching profession but there are these added responsibilities. I think it is an awesome task that the teacher has.
>
> Isolation and lack of support. Well, isolation first in terms of what they are teaching and how they are doing. Secondly, support for the nuts and bolts of things having to do with education. The third thing would be an opportunity to get feedback about their teaching.
>
> I think probably discipline and classroom management. Next would be curriculum and lesson planning. The third one would be things like school routines, scheduling, like how do I fit into the school. Those are the ones we seem to hear as essential.

When we juxtaposed comments such as these against what the literature had said about the problems of beginning teachers we found a good correspondence. For example Veenman (1984) examined extensively the professional and personal concerns of beginning teachers and found the nature of their problems arose from what he terms "Praxxishock" or reality shock suffered in the transition from teacher training to actual teaching on the front lines of the schoolroom. He identifies eight perceived problems most often experienced by beginning teachers in their first years of teaching as classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students work, relationships with parents, organization of class work, insufficient or inadequate teaching materials or supplies, and dealing with problems of individual students.

The province in which the study took place had recently had a Royal Commission on Education which had made a recommendation that district-based induction programs be established co-operatively by school districts and teachers, and that they be characterized by special support services and carefully designed teaching assignments during the first year of induction. When asked about how they had responded to that recommendation, the following types of comments followed from district administrators:

> We haven't discussed it as a district analysis of that particular aspect of the report, although the district has done a lot of work in terms of the Royal Commission Recommendations. I think personally that it is something that one needs to support. That is not a district view but a personal response.
>
> We haven't had a formal discussion on that yet. Certainly we would go along with that.
>
> We have general support for that statement. We can certainly try to program towards this recommendation. I'm not sure if that implies a reduced assignment for new teachers. Practically, a funding shortage in most districts to implement reduced assignments and responsibilities for extra funding would fall on the ministry.

We now see something of a shift to the concerns about finances and other obstacles that come in the way to developing such programs. In fact five of the districts indicated that they did not have a separate program for beginning teachers but added that there were some things like basic orientation to the district that were offered. The remaining four districts said they had a separate program. We then undertook to compare the two using a beginning teacher questionnaire distributed to beginning teachers in two of the districts, one who indicated that they had a program and the other that indicted that they did not. The data from this comparison appear in tables 1 and 2. Table 1 shows the number of students who answered 'yes ' to the question, did you receive the following assistance? District D claimed to have a program for beginning teachers; district J did not. Table 2 reports the beginning teacher responses to a question asking them if they participated or received information about the nine items listed in that table.

Table I
Beginning Teacher Yes Responses to question : Did you receive the following assistance?

Items	District D	District J	District D **	District J **
1. System Information	22	14	73%	61%
2. Resources Materials	24	15	80%	65%
3. Instructional	20	14	67%	61%
4. Emotional	26	17	87%	74%
5. Classroom Management	22	19	73%	83%
6. Environment	07	06	23%	26%
7. Demonstration Teaching	11	07	37%	30%

** Percentage of total respondents (District D n=30; District J n=23)

Table II
Frequency of Items beginning teachers said they received or participated in.

Items	District D	District J	*District D	**District J
Printed Information	21	14	13.3%	13.0%
Orientation meetings	19	19	12.0%	17.6%
Orientation visits	12	11	07.6%	10.2%
B.T. group meetings	11	09	07.0%	08.3%
Meeting other teachers	17	10	10.8%	09.3%
Mentors/Helping Teachers	14	05	08.9%	04.6%
Workshops Conferences	25	16	15.8%	14.8%
Observe other teachers	12	08	07.6%	07.4%
Unsolicited Help	24	15	15.2%	13.9%
Other	03	01	01.9%	00.9%

*Percentage of total responses for District D ** Percentage of total responses for District J

It would be hard to make a case that either group of beginning teachers faired better in either of these districts. While a higher percentage of the students in district D reported having received systems and resource information than in district J, those in district J reported more orientation meetings and visits. From these data and from the written comments the students provided, we concluded that the differences reported by different beginning teachers were more a function of school to school difference then district to district difference.

The data from these two tables convey another message about the assistance provided to beginning teachers. A high percentage of beginning teachers reported receiving system information and resource materials. However, when asked about observing other teachers and meeting with other teachers the percentage drops considerably. Coupled with other data obtained from student comments, it appeared to us that the broad type of assistance provided came at the level of nuts and bolts information. Few of the other levels were being addressed. The importance of this should not underestimated. One beginning teacher spoke very highly of the welcome she had had to the district, and when she learned that they had a program for beginning teachers, she reported feeling very special.

Our interpretation of the data gave us a sense that while induction had been given priority in high places with regards to how people talked about it, it had not yet become a serious and integral part of most school districts. The assistance beginning teachers were receiving was more a function of the school and significant colleagues rather then any planned thrust on the part the district. It seemed that efforts were needed at all levels of the organization, not just from the district. Further, it appeared to us that in those schools that did not have a good school culture to begin with, grafting on a school induction program would have limited effects. Perhaps the very best induction program arises out a healthy school As we examined Rosenholtz's conditions for a good induction program, we asked ourselves what part of that list would we not want for all teachers?

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